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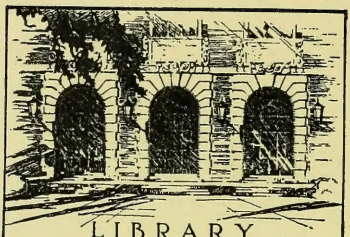
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STATE OF ILLINOIS

DEPARTMENT OF REGISTRATION AND EDUCATION

DIVISION OF THE

NATURAL HISTORY SURVEY

FORESTRY CIRCULAR No. 1

Concerning a Forestry Survey and a Forester for Illinois

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To the People of Illinois:

DO YOU KNOW

That some 30 per cent of the State of Illinois, known to the pioneer as "the Prairie State," was originally covered by trees?

That about two-thirds of this primitive forest area has been deforested, a good deal of it to its own injury and to the disadvantage of its owners?

That much of this deforested land was really unfit for permanent agriculture and has now been abandoned as worn out?

That much of it has been so injured by erosion, due to the removal of trees, that it is worthless now and can only be restored to usefulness by reforestation?

That some five or six million acres of Illinois land, now largely cleared of trees, should have all remained as permanent forest because better adapted to the growth of trees than to any other use?

That very little of the three or four million acres of forest remaining in the state is being properly handled and cared for according to modern methods of forest management?

That this is all in violation of the fundamental principles of conservation of our natural resources and a neglect of our duty to transmit our heritage, unimpaired if not improved, to coming generations?

It is because these facts are becoming known to a few who are in a position to apply a remedy that a forestry survey of the state has been begun, that a forester has been appointed as a member of the staff of the Natural History Survey of the State, and that inquiries and investigations have been set on foot with a view to defining and establishing a permanent forestry policy for Illinois.

Objects of a Forestry Survey.

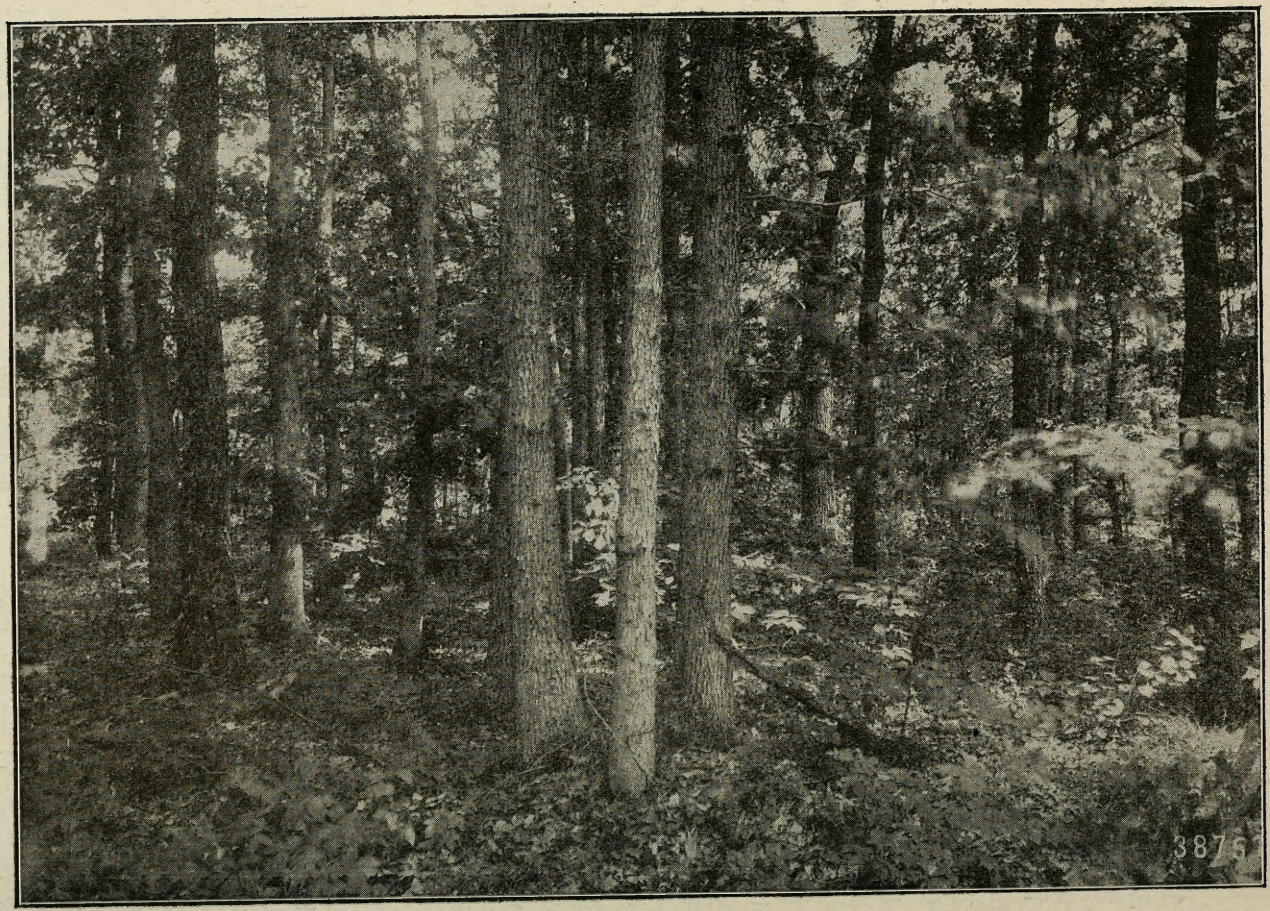
These are too numerous for detailed analysis in this brief circular, but the following are a few of those most immediately important:

1. To ascertain precisely the present conditions and values of our existing forests, in order that we may know which of them should be permanently kept as forest properties and which may be more profitably cleared up, now or later, for agricultural purposes.

2. To survey also deforested lands for an estimate of their values for forestry and agriculture respectively, and to make recommendations for their use accordingly.

3. To find forest tracts available for cooperative management, under the direction of the state forester, as a means of demonstrating to those interested proper methods of forest management, including the selection of trees for cutting, the maintenance of reproduction, and the gradual substitution of more valuable for less valuable and worthless kinds.

4. To select forest tracts which it is desirable that the state should acquire as permanent sources of supply to Illinois industries.



Young White Oak, Greene County, Illinois
Photograph by the U. S. Forest Service

Once a forest, then a cultivated field, and now a ruin, due to deforestation and erosion. Randolph County, Illinois.
Photograph by the State Soil Survey

5. To study markets, means of transportation, expenses of preparation and delivery, and other economic matters a knowledge of which is necessary to the most profitable utilization of forest products in this state.

6. To study the uses and values of the farm wood-lot as a feature in the management of Illinois farms.

7. To study the woods-pasture problem—the advantages and disadvantages of the use of woodlands for pasturage by cattle, hogs, and sheep.

8. To study the relation of Illinois forests, and of their removal, to the problem of permanent water supplies, to the occurrence of floods in streams, and to the maintenance of underground waters at levels which will prevent their recession beyond the reach of the crop plants in times of drouth.

9. To study the geographic and local distribution within the state of the most important trees and their several relations to differences of soil, water supply, drainage, slope, exposure, and the like, with a view to a choice, for preservation, maintenance, and cultivation, of the kinds best adapted to each set of local conditions.

10. To take account of the value of woodlands, existing or proposed, for recreational uses, not only by the inhabitants of the larger cities of the state, but by country people and the inhabitants of the smaller towns, whose home surroundings are often oppressively monotonous.

11. To consider also the uses of forests as preserves of the primitive life of the state, of great interest and value to the student of science and his teacher and to the lovers of wild life.

12. To coordinate the forest policy of the state with the existing movement for the establishment of a system of state parks, so that overlapping or conflicting plans may be avoided and that each of these interests may be made to serve the other.

The Survey Forester.

The forester of the Natural History Survey (who may be called "state forester" for convenience' sake), plans, organizes, and carries on the various operations above referred to—according as means, facilities, and assistance are furnished him by the State—under the general direction of the Survey chief and subject to the approval of the Board of Natural Resources and Conservation. This Board, associated in an advisory capacity with the Director of the State Department of Registration and Education, of which Department the Natural History Survey is a division, is charged with the duty of considering and deciding all matters pertaining to forestry and allied research, and with the selection and appointment of the scientific staff.

It is a part of the duty of the forester, especially important at the present time, to contribute to the education of the public in forestry matters by making addresses, by preparing circulars and articles for the press, and by interesting educational institutions, clubs, and business organizations in the work of the Survey.

As the more urgent practical demands of the situation are met, principal attention will be given to careful, prolonged scientific research on problems fundamental to the science and art of forestry, for which a scientific staff and an equipment for investigation will be required.

The office of the forester is at Urbana, the seat of the University of Illinois, which furnishes the necessary office and laboratory rooms for the Natural History

Survey and the other scientific surveys of the State. This location affords many opportunities for helpful conference and cooperation, especially with the topographical survey carried on as a part of the work of the Geological Survey of the State, the soil survey, conducted by the Agricultural Experiment Station of the University of Illinois, the Farm Management Bureau of the Experiment Station, the county farm advisers, and the Extension Service. The forester will be pleased to hear, at any time at the above address, from those interested in his work.

STEPHEN A. FORBES,
Chief, Natural History Survey
ROBERT B. MILLER,
Forester, Natural History Survey

Urbana, Illinois,
February 12, 1920.

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